DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 283 767 SO 018 303

AUTHOR Hartoonian, H. Michael
TITLE National Consciousness in a Global Community.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 13p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Foreign Policy; *Global Approach; *International Cooperation; *International Relations; *Nationalism; Political Attitudes; Social Sciences; Social Studies; United States Government (Course); World Affairs; World Problems

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the argument that in order for democracy and the free enterprise system to continue to thrive, U.S. citizens must overcome the boundaries imposed by a national consciousness and develop a truly international perspective. The study of American history reveals a loyalty to and a concern for the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence. To many citizens who believe in these ideals, loyalty has come to have less to do with territory and more to do with consistency with an ethical framework based upon these ideals. Loyalty, which is at the base of national consciousness, is thus understood as a function of consistency with a belief system rooted in the best of human character. Moreover, loyalty is withheld from anyone or any state falling outside of or inconsistent with this value system or ethical framework. If a development of mind beyond nationalism were to take place, it would be toward a conception of the globe. Democratic forms of economic and political organizations are most appropriate to lead the development of an international ethical framework because of the world distribution of wealth and power. "Self interest," properly understood, means caring for the community in which we live, which can be expanded to mean the earth. International stewardship or the care of the global community is necessary if good economic and political systems are to develop and endure. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED283767

NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

by

H. Michael Hartoonian

SO018303

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Michael Hartoonian

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN A GLOBAL COMMUNITY

by
H. Michael Hartoonian

> "One-hundred and twenty acres, according to the county clerk, is the extent of my worldly domain. But the County Clerk is a sleepy fellow, who never looks at his record books before 9 o'clock. What they would show at daybreak is the question here at issue. Books or no books, it is a fact, patented to my dog and myself that at daybreak I am the sole owner of all the acres I can walk over. It is not only boundaries that disappear, but also the thought of being bounded. Expanses unknown to deed or map are known to every dawn and solitude, supposed no longer to exist in my country, extends on every hand as far as the dew can reach."
>
> Aldo Leopold

The thought of being bounded permeates human thought. It is such a part of our makeup that even the words of Aldo Leopold seem nothing more than romantic utterances. We are bounded by our language, our laws, our beliefs, our sense of territory, and our way of thinking. This "cocoon of culture" in which we live protects us, but also truncates our opportunities for growth by blurring our vision and understanding of others. Yet, this is precisely what is at issue in any discussion about nationalism and the larger world . . . boundaries, protection and opportunity (the ability to understand what to put aside and what to build anew). This chance to grow rests upon our skill in shifting the way we view ourselves in the world.

Marilyn Ferguson, writing in The Aquarian Conspiracy addresses this notion of "seeing" anew when she relates this portion of the Victorian fantasy, Flatland:

> The characters in Flatland are assorted geometric shapes living in an exclusively two-dimensional world. As the story opens, the narrator, a middle-aged

*Dr. Hartoonian is supervisor of social studies education for the state of Wisconsin, Department of Public Instruction, Madison.

Square, has a disturbing dream in which he visits a one-dimensional realm, Lineland, whose inhabitants can only move from point to point. With mounting frustration, he attempts to explain himself . . . that he is a line of lines from a domain where you can move not only from point to point but also from side to side. The angry Linelanders are about to attack him when he awakens.

Later that same day he attempts to help his grandson, a little hexagon, with his studies. The grandson suggests the possibilities of a third dimension . . . a realm with up and down as well as side to side. The Square proclaims this notion foolish and unimaginable.

That very night the Square has an extraordinary, life changing encounter--a visit from an inhabitant of Spaceland, the realm of three dimensions.

At first the Square is merely puzzled by his visitor, a peculiar circle who seems to change in size, even disappear. The visitor explains that he is a Sphere. He only seems to change size and disappear because he was moving toward the Square in space and descending at the same time.

Realizing that argument alone will not convince the Square of the third dimension, the exasperated Sphere creates for him an experience of depth. The Square is badly shaken:

> There's a dizzy, sickening sensation of sight that was not like seeing; I saw a line that was no line; space that was no space. I saw myself and not myself. When I could find voice, I shrieked aloud in agony, 'either this is madness or it is hell.'
>
> 'It is neither,' calmly replied the voice of the Sphere. It is knowledge; it is three-dimensions. Open your eyes once again and try to look steadily."

> The common wisdom about transcendant moments is that they can never be properly communicated, only experienced. There is an incredible sensory aspect to those experiences, sometimes vaguely described as transcendant, transpersonal, spiritual, altered, non-ordinary, or peak. These sensations . . . light, connection, love, timeliness, loss of boundaries . . . are further complicated by paradoxes that confound logical description. As the hapless Square said in trying to describe the third dimension, 'I saw a line that was no line.'

And, we too may have to describe to ourselves "a line that is no line" for the transformation that will allow us to hold nationalism and globalism in our minds simultaneously may be the next important and most difficult boundary for the human race to transcend.

When placing the concept of national consciousness in juxtaposition to global community, we are immediately confronted with cognitive and emotional tensions rooted in human history, our perception of the complexities of contemporary society and even questions about survival. National consciousness is defined here as a conceptual framework that allows for a simplification of the life space in which we all function. That simplification is realized through our collective creation of territoriality and loyalty, and serves as a screen which protects us from a world which is perceived as hostile and complex. National consciousness is similar to the concept of territoriality used by geographer Robert Sack . . . "the attempt by an individual or group to influence, affect, or control objects, people, and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area . . . territoriality acts as a container or mold for the spatial property of events (Sack, 1983)." It would seem that today we need to understand and explain our activities as territorial, because the human being seems incapable of describing events in nonterritorial terms.

National consciousness also carries the attribute of loyalty. The issue of loyalty relative to the individual and the nation state, has been an intriguing political and literary theme throughout history. From Antigone to the protest movements of the 1960s, to the economic issues of today, we have been and are aware of the tensions between the group, family, or individual relative to society or the state. We have asked such questions as: "Is it possible for an individual to behave justly in an unjust society?" "What is the proper relationship between the individual and the state?" "What does self-interest mean within a national consciousness or national history?"

In the study of American history we have seen a loyalty to and a concern for implementing the ideals (natural law) stated in the Declaration of Independence. However, it would seem that periodically we must rediscover these ideals so that they might be manifested in our present lives. To many U.S. citizens who believe in these ideals, loyalty has come to have less to do with territory and more to do with "consistency" with an ethical framework based upon these ideals. Loyalty is thus understood (and acted upon) as a function of consistency with a belief system rooted in the best of the human character. Further, loyalty is withheld from anyone or any state falling outside of or inconsistent with this value system or ethical framework. This, of course, was the case with Thomas Jefferson vis-a-vis England at the time of his writing of the Declaration of Independence. Simply stated, the British government was perceived as inconsistent with an established ethical framework and no longer commended loyalty from its citizens.

The concept of national consciousness, then, represents an interesting tension within the realities of today's economic, social, and political systems. On the one hand, it blurs human dreams of "a more perfect union" and, on the other hand, it brings some psychological control to a hodge-podge of human needs and desires. In the historic search for justice and security, national consciousness has been and still is a necessary state of mind. Yet,

as Norman Cousins argues, "The values of nationalism are incompatible with human survival" (Cousins, 1984).

One could logically assume that if a development of mind beyond nationalism were to take place, it would be toward a conception of the globe. And, we might think that this is a futuristic notion, but, as a matter of fact, "global community" is by no means a modern day phenomenon. International and global commerce date back in Western history to the 15th and 16th centuries. In a sense, America was "discovered" and settled by Europeans because the European mindset or conception about the Earth was changing. "Globalism" was an idea whose time had come. Economic ideas, such as merchantialism and emperialism made sense only within this global conception. One could argue that American history ended in 1492 and from that point on "American history," was and is world or global in scope. And whether we talk about economics, military-strategy, environmental issues, monetary concerns, human rights, or Star War weapons, we are seeing an evolutionary process that started for us, at least, in the 15th century.

Against this backdrop, we can frame the pivotal question of this issue: can national consciousness be transcended, and if so, what conceptual framework would, or should, take its place?

To begin with, it may be important for us to consider the power of nationalism and territoriality in the human consciousness. A sense of place seems to be incoded in our genes. From the discipline of philosophy to that of psychology; from antiquity to the present, the concepts of place, roots, nationalism, territoriality, tribalism and chauvinism have been studied and practiced. In Plato's Republic a strong argument is made that even differences of inate qualities need to be understood as rooted in place. The men of gold, of iron, and of bronze of which Plato spoke were seen as alloyeds of the Earth. Of course, the question is whether Plato's conception of "Earth" was exclusive or inclusive.

On the other hand, Shakespeare is clearly exclusive as he eloquently speaks of territoriality and nationalism (King Richard II, Act II):

> This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd aisle
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise;
> This fortress built by nature for herself.
> Against infection and the hand of war;
> This happy breed of men, this little world;
> This precious stone set in the silver sea,
> Which serves it in the office of wall,
> Or as a mote defensive to a house,
> Against the envy of less happier lands;
> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England.

Perhaps, the exclusiveness of Shakespeare is shared by most people, because it is consistent with our conceptions of control and simplicity and with our inability, as of yet, to replace our affection of the flat map with an appreciation of the globe.

But today we are living in an inclusive reality. What has happened (and is still happening) in the world is an immense networking of economic and military interdependence that is sustained, in large part, by playing one nation state against others. While the states still hold to 15th and 16th century notions of exclusivity; economic and military systems treat the world as a 21st century global market and military theatre. If a multi-national feels it can get a better "deal" from state X, it will simply trade with that state. If taxes or wages are too high in one place, the corporation can move to another. Labor is labor, be it Michigan or Malaysian. There is perhaps an even more dramatic example of 15th century

versus 21st century thought relative to economic well being. In this decade, both France and England used opposite political ideologies to deal with their economic problems. The former tried a socialistic approach and nationalized some industries and established more extensive social programs. The latter tried an extremely conservative approach, cutting the involvement of government in the economic system. Both failed! And, the reason for these failures can be found in the conceptions that both hold relative to a nation's economic system being confined to its political map. Like it or not, France and England are part of the European economic community and the global markets, beyond, and without attention to this fact their economic policies were programmed to fail. By the way, while the governments of these two nations continued to ride their ideological bandwagons, knowledgeable bankers, merchants, industrialists, and military leaders in both nations have smilingly turned their attention to the globe.

As other societies consider their economic problems, the experiences of France and England can be seen as metaphoric. "Internal" policy making is no longer sufficient. Nations must consider global economic connections simply because reality demands it. Reality also demands that states attend to the relationships that exist not only between and among them, but between and among individuals and groups (including economic, academic, and artistic groups) who happen to live in those states. The question here at issue is whether or not these relationships and networks can be constructed within a mindset that places emphasis upon cooperation. What this might suggest is a different view of the relationship between ethics and the state.

It is problematic as to whether or not the possibility exists for a state or corporation to be ethical, for only people have obligations in the moral order (Martin, 1983). Most would agree that ethical obligations can exist only between and among people. Further, these obligations cannot be shifted to another (person) . . . one cannot delegate a moral obligation.

In light of history, it is safe to argue that states (and corporations) interact within an ethical vacuum. That is, there is little international law* and nearly no global ethical system except where individuals link and apply pressure through working on common objectives such as the stewardship of the environment, human rights, and peace. While these types of activities are important, they will never sufficiently saturate nor fill the global ethical vacuum. Thus, states (and corporations) must take some responsibility in the creation of a global ethical system.

What is called for is not the elimination of the state (or corporation). That would be as absurd as suggesting that the way to have a moral world is to eliminate all the people. Rather, the need is for states to better understand their own self interest. "Self interest properly understood" means caring for the community in which we live. And, (like it or not) that community is the earth. Our economic and military systems have made it so. Now we must bring our ethical and political systems into parity. If this balance of power between economic and military systems on the one hand, and ethical and political systems on the other is not achieved, then human survival is, indeed, problematic.

A simple ethical principle must be raised by nation states, corporations, and the individuals who live and work therein. And, that principle is the understanding that global stewardship or the care of the community is necessary if "good" business and political systems are to develop and endure. The word stewardship, as used here, derives its meaning from origins in Greek and early English. The Greek word, "oikonomos" means the manager of the house. The English word, "ward" or caretaker of the "sty" comes from, "one who cares for another's property." Both the Greek and Anglo-Saxon meanings incorporate the attributes of, (1) an entrustment by the owner, (2) a responsible worker, and, (3) a final accounting. The notion

---

*While the World Court is a good beginning, litigation is voluntary.

of accountability, worker or servant, and trust are fundamental to the concept of stewardship. And, "of what are we stewards?" The obvious answer, of course, is that we are stewards of the cultural heritage, (The cultural heritage consists of the codified knowledge of the human family.) . . . the ideas (knowledge) and ideals (wisdom) of the past that must find their way into the future. We are entrusted and accountable servants to our culture, to our contemporaries, and to future citizens.

The principle of stewardship is particularly relevant to the private enterprise system and representative democracy.

It is important to understand that democratic forms of economic and political organizations are most appropriate to lead in the development of a global ethical framework. This argument is advanced because of the world distribution of wealth and power today, and the genesis of these powerful systems. In Western history, representative democracy's roots are found in such documents as the Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Capitalism, rooted in Adam Smith's work, The Wealth of Nations, also argues for individual rights within an ethical system or just community. There may be arrogance in arguing from this western perspective, but at this point in human history it is where we must begin . . . for with power also comes obligations. Those individuals who cherish the values of life, justice, happiness, and stewardship must insist that political and economic systems work to establish the just community, and to establish that just community by example.

National consciousness is at best, then, a conscience. A conscience helps us do justice and avoid evil, and our job as citizens is to hold consciousness and conscience together. This will take a great deal of moral courage. But, it may be the case that at no other time in history have people been more open to the creative power of morality. If we can bring

the appropriate amount of moral courage to this endeavor, then individual conscience and national consciousness may become the seed bed for ethical political and economic policy.

Thus, at this point in history we have an opportunity to improve and strengthen our nation through a transformation of the concept of territory. Such a transformation would move the notions of national and global from disjunctive or separate ideas to an inclusive set that would provide the appropriate perspective for making ethical policies within the human ecosystem in wihch we all must function.

References

Cousins, Norman. 1984 U.S.A. Today, (September) Vol. 113/No. 2472.

Dear, M. 1981. "Theory of the local state." In Political studies from spatial perspectives, ed. A. Burnette and P. Taylor. New York: John Wiley.

Dyson-Hudson, R., and Alden-Smith, E. 1978. "Human territoriality: an ecological reassessment." American Anthropologist 80:21-41.

Ferguson, Marilyn. 1980 The Aquarian Conspiracy, Los Angeles; J.P. Tarcher.

Hesse, M. 1967 "Action at a distance and field theory." In The encyclopedia of philosophy, pp. 9-15. New York: Macmillian.

Martin, T. R. 1983 Stewarship: The Corporation and The Individual, I.T.T. KCG Productions, Inc. N.Y. 10016.

Sack, R. 1973. A concept of physical space in geography. Geographical Analysis V: 16-34.

1981. "Territorial bases of power." In Political Studies from Spatial Perspectives, ed. A.D. Burnett and P.J. Taylor, N.Y.: John Wiley.

Scott, W. 1981 Organizations: rational, natural, and open systems. Englewood Cliffs, N.H.: Prentice-Hall.

Soja, E. 1971. The political organization of space. Washington: Association of American Geographers, Commission on College Geography.

X66B